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(GRUNDY.)

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CHARACTERS.

Captain Huntington	...	Mr. J. D. Beveridge
Dinah	...	Miss Florence Chalgrove
Bell Huntington	...	Miss Louise Moodie

MAN PROPOSES.

SCENE.—*A handsome room, with a large window opening out upon a garden; doors* R. *and* L.; *piano, album, bell, pen, ink and paper on table,* L. C.; *circular ottoman,* R. C. BELL HUNTINGTON, *discovered seated, working at some fancy work, which she lays down upon her lap as curtain rises.*

BELL. I don't care! If I did get half his money, I don't see that I am under any obligation to him. After all, it was his friendship for my uncle, not for me, that made him leave it me; and I have had to change my name to Huntington to get it. Huntington, indeed! Because *his* name was Huntington, he thought there wasn't such another in the world; but I'm sure Campbell was much nicer. I wonder whether Captain Huntington, his nephew, lost or benefited by the change *he* had to undergo, to get the other half. I wonder what his name was. No, I don't. I don't care anything about it. I'm not going to marry him, just to keep the money in one family. (*Enter* DINAH, R.) Dinah, hasn't the Colonel come home yet?

DINAH. No, miss.

BELL. He said he should be back in time to welcome Captain Huntington, a gentleman who is to call this afternoon.

DINAH. Is that the gentleman you're going to marry?

BELL. What do *you* know about it?

DINAH. Nothing, miss. I only just put two and two together.

BELL. Well, now, Dinah, give me your advice. (*sits* L., *sofa*) I always like to ask your advice, because you never expect me to take it. Suppose an old man left you half his money and someone else the other half, and wanted you to marry him, should you?

DINAH. Marry the old man, miss?

BELL. No, the young man, Dinah.

DINAH. Captain Huntington?

BELL. Yes, Captain Huntington.

DINAH. That would depend on what sort of a man he was.

BELL. He can't be half as nice as Captain Wynter.

DINAH. The gentleman we met on the Rhine? Oh, miss, I don't like Captain Wynter: he's so shy. I'm sure I don't know how it is. I've never found the military like that.

BELL. Is that my uncle?

DINAH. (*who has gone to window*) No, miss, it's a younger gentleman.

BELL. It must be Captain Huntington. Now listen, Dinah, what I'm going to do. The man who marries me must marry me to please himself, and not to please his uncle.

So if I am introduced to him as someone else, and he will marry me in spite of that, why, perhaps, I'll marry *him.* (*rises*) So, Dinah, I resume my old name. Remember now. The Colonel's out, Miss Huntington is out; but say, her cousin, Miss Campbell, will be pleased to see him.

DINAH. I will, miss.

BELL. Don't forget! Miss Campbell.

DINAH. Oh, what fun! It'll be as good as amateur theatricals. (*Exit* DINAH, R.)

BELL. I hope it will be better. (*Exit*, L.)

CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON *is seen through window, coming up the walk, crossing the stage from* L. *to* R. *Re-enter* DINAH, R., *showing him in.*

DINAH. Will you walk this way, sir?

CAPTAIN H. Is the Colonel in?

DINAH. I'm not quite sure, sir, but I'll ascertain. What name shall I say?

CAPTAIN H. Please give him my card—Captain Huntington. (*Exit* DINAH, L.) This is the very irony of destiny. That charming girl I met on the Rhine, twelve months ago, was niece to Colonel Campbell, who lives here. The girl I'm asked to marry is niece to the same uncle as the girl I want to marry. If it should be she! But that would be too much to hope for. Even if it were, I should hardly dare to speak to her. It's no use, I must get over this confounded nervousness. (*tries to whistle and to swagger unconcernedly. Re-enter* DINAH, L. *He starts back, and collapses*)

DINAH. The Colonel has not yet come home, sir, and Miss Huntington is out.

CAPTAIN H. The Colonel not come home? I'll call another day. Good-morning.

DINAH. Stay, sir, stay. Her cousin will be glad to see you.

CAPTAIN H. I won't trouble her.

DINAH. But, sir, her cousin wants to see you.

CAPTAIN H. I'll call another day. Good-morning.

DINAH. But her cousin, sir—Miss Campbell——

CAPTAIN H. Who? (*drops into a chair*)

DINAH. Aren't you very well?

CAPTAIN H. (*jumping up*) Who is this Miss Campbell?

DINAH. Colonel Campbell's niece. Aren't you the gentleman who met her on the Rhine?

CAPTAIN H. I did meet a Miss Campbell on the Rhine.

DINAH. I thought I recognised you. (*aside*) It's that Captain Wynter! I'll tell her you will see her. (*Exit*, L.)

CAPTAIN H. She's gone. I'm in for it. This is the chance for which I have been praying for the last twelve months, and now it's come I feel as if I almost wished it hadn't. I must shake off this folly. I'll approach her boldly. I'll say, dear Miss Campbell, this unexpected meeting

is an opportunity for which I have been sighing—an opportunity of telling the most lovely woman in the world that I adore her to distraction. If I only had a drop of brandy! I shall say I fell in love with her at sight—she is the idol of my dreams—the object of my wildest aspirations—the divinity of——

Re-enter BELL, L.

BELL. Captain Wynter!

CAPTAIN H. How d'you do?

BELL. This *is* an unexpected meeting. How do you do?

CAPTAIN. H. Shall I call again? Some day when Colonel Campbell——

BELL. I expect him every moment. You mustn't think of going till he comes. Let me relieve you of your hat and cane. They seem to incommode you. (*takes them from him*)

CAPTAIN H. Thank you.

BELL. Till he comes, you'll have to put up with a stupid girl.

CAPTAIN H. There's nothing I like better. (*she looks at him*) Nothing, I assure you.

BELL. Won't you sit down?

CAPTAIN H. Thank you.

Sits upon her fancy work; she takes it up and resumes her seat.

BELL. I am so glad you've found us out at last. I was beginning to despair of ever seeing you again. (*working*)

CAPTAIN H. I should have called before, but—but—the fact is, I've had such a very bad cold.

BELL. A bad cold for the last twelve months?

CAPTAIN H. The last ten days. I mean, since I was told where Colonel Campbell lived. I never heard before.

BELL. And I suppose it didn't occur to you to look in the directory? However, you have managed to discover us, so I'll forgive you; but I'm sorry it has cost you so much trouble.

CAPTAIN H. Don't mention it. It was no trouble at all. I got your uncle's letter making the appointment, stepped into a cab, and here I am.

BELL. Oh, then it was my uncle who found *you* out, and you've come by invitation?

CAPTAIN H. Certainly.

BELL. (*aside; rises, crossing to* R.) I might have known as much. I suppose my uncle wanted you to meet a brother officer of yours, whom we expect to-day.

CAPTAIN H. (*aside*) A rival. (*sits*)

BELL. Do you know him? Captain Huntington?

CAPTAIN H. Who? (*rises*)

BELL. Captain Huntington.

CAPTAIN H. I think there's some mistake. I'm Captain Huntington.

BELL. You, Captain Wynter!

CAPTAIN H. I've had a fortune left me, and I've changed my name.

BELL. This, then, explains your unexpected visit. It is Miss Huntington you came to see—not me! I'm sorry I've detained you. (*going*)

CAPTAIN H. (*rising*) Don't go. It *was* Miss Huntington I came to see, but I'm so glad she's out. You don't know how relieved I am when people I call upon are out. And I'm so awfully glad to see you. Do sit down again.

BELL. (*sitting*) Ha! ha! ha! (*resuming work*) Well, I'll keep you company till she returns. She's gone out riding; but, of course, you'll wait for her.

CAPTAIN H. I shall be glad of the excuse. (*sits on sofa*) What sort of girl is this Miss Huntington? I hear she's very good-looking.

BELL. I can't say that. They say she is exceedingly like me. (*looks at him*)

CAPTAIN H. Indeed! (*pause*)

BELL. She has my nose, and that you know is fatal to her beauty. (*rises ; crosses to table*)

CAPTAIN H. A plain nose is certainly a blemish.

BELL. However, you can form your own opinion. (*fetches album*) There we both are, side by side. (*gives it him ; sits*) What do you think of us?

CAPTAIN H. (*sitting with the album on his knees*) The lady in the riding habit is——

BELL. Miss Huntington.

CAPTAIN H. She certainly is marvellously like you. Are you twins?

BELL. Twins, Captain? we are cousins!

CAPTAIN H. Of course, I mean twin cousins. I beg your pardon. Not being a family man myself, twins are confusing.

BELL. They are one too many for most people. (*rises*)

CAPTAIN H. I should certainly have taken this to be your likeness.

BELL. Many do. (*stands over him*)

CAPTAIN H. (*poring over album*) There is a wonderful resemblance. Here is the same bright face—the same dark eyes—the same intelligent expression—the same bewitching —— (*suddenly looks up and sees* BELL *smiling over him; jumps up, upsetting album on the floor*) I beg your pardon, I'd quite forgotten any one was there!

BELL. (CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON *picking up the album*) You're going to fall in love with cousin Bell. (*returns album to table*)

CAPTAIN H. Impossible.

BELL. Why so?

CAPTAIN H. I am in love already.

BELL. Really! Might I inquire how long you've been in that predicament? (*sits*, R.)

CAPTAIN H. Twelve months.

BELL. You met the lady twelve months since?

CAPTAIN H. On the Rhine. (*coughs*)

BELL. Indeed! (*coughs, goes to table*) What age was she?

CAPTAIN H. About as old as you.

BELL. How singular! Blonde or brunette?

CAPTAIN H. Oh, somewhere about your complexion.

Puts one of his gloves in his mouth and looks very frightened.

BELL. I wish I'd seen the lady. But I suppose you didn't meet her whilst you were with us?

CAPTAIN H. I met her the same day that I met you. (*seizes a ball of wool off sofa*)

BELL. How very strange! And did you meet with her again when you had left us?

CAPTAIN H. I never saw her afterwards till——

BELL. Till——

CAPTAIN H. (*drops the ball, which rolls unravelled*) I beg your pardon. (*dives after it*)

BELL. (*rises; crosses to* L.) Oh you clumsy Captain, what a mess you've made of it.

CAPTAIN H. I'm very sorry.

BELL. (*sits on sofa*) Idle hands are always getting into mischief. Lend them me. (*holding a skein*)

CAPTAIN H. My hands? (*sits* L. *of sofa*)

BELL. Yes, not your gloves. (*takes his gloves off him*) You must do penance for the mischief you have done. (*puts skein upon his hands and begins winding*) Now tell me more about this friend of yours.

CAPTAIN H. There is nothing more to tell, except that I'm awfully fond of her.

BELL. And how does she like you?

CAPTAIN H. I don't know.

BELL. Don't you *want* to know?

CAPTAIN H. I'd give the world!

BELL. Why don't you ask her, then?

CAPTAIN H. Suppose she should say no?

BELL. (*looking at him full*) Suppose she should say yes. (*he drops the skein*) You've lost the thread—when we were getting on so nicely, too.

CAPTAIN H. I'm very stupid, amn't I?

BELL. (*putting it on again*) Well, you are certainly not much assistance. Do try and manage better this time, please. *I* met a gentleman on the Rhine.

CAPTAIN H. Indeed!

BELL. An officer.

CAPTAIN H. Good-looking?

BELL. Very; and my uncle said he was a splendid soldier, though I shouldn't have thought it.

CAPTAIN H. Shouldn't you?

BELL. He was so very shy. He might have faced a regiment of men, perhaps; but I'm quite sure a regiment of women would have been too much for him.

CAPTAIN H. Of course, you didn't like him?

BELL. Yes, I did.

CAPTAIN H. And, of course, he liked you?

BELL. He never said so. When he went away, he never asked to be allowed to call on me, and he never did, and I should so have liked to see him.

CAPTAIN H. What an ass he was!

BELL. They say that modesty is charming, but it's very difficult to get on with. Oh, very!

CAPTAIN H. Ah! how I wish I was that man! (BELL *suddenly stops winding, gazes at him in amazed despair and goes on rapidly*) You're winding very fast. I wonder how you do it. I suppose it's practice.

BELL. No, it's only temper.

CAPTAIN H. I am doing better than I was, eh?

BELL. Not a bit.

CAPTAIN H. Why, we are nearly at the end.

BELL. As far from it as ever! (*flings the wool on the floor, and jumps up, stamps her foot, and sits down at piano*)

CAPTAIN H. I wonder what I've done? (*aside*)

BELL *plays a few bars viciously, while he sits gazing at her in helpless admiration; she suddenly wheels round upon the stool, and folds her hands.*

BELL. Well?

CAPTAIN H. Having I said anything that has offended you?

BELL. It isn't what you've *said*. (*wheels round again and plays a few more bars*)

CAPTAIN H. (*aside, rises*) It's what I've looked. My admiration has been too pronounced.

BELL. (*glancing round*) My uncle will be here directly. (*poutingly*)

CAPTAIN H. I shall be pleased to see him.

She makes an angry plunge upon the keys; he sits at a distance.

BELL. Why don't you sit a little further off? You'd hear the music better. (*he moves further off; she gets up and goes to him*) Captain Huntington, if it is only for the credit of the British Army, even when you *are* alarmed, don't run. (*brings him to* R.C.) Are there many like you in your regiment?

CAPTAIN H. Yes, several have been promoted recently.

BELL. Promotion must be very rapid in that quarter.

(*crosses to piano*)

CAPTAIN H. Rapid? (*crosses to sofa and sits*)

BELL. There are so many retiring officers. I presume that

yours are what are called the reserved forces? (*sits at piano, playing*) Do you like music?

CAPTAIN H. Yes, the music of your voice.

BELL. Oh, you're recovering. (*plays and sings*)

CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON *rises at end of first verse. Business at piano.*

Air.—"Love will find out the way."

Once let a beauty incline to be kind,
Though to his duty her lover be blind;
To her aid let her summon what courage she may,
And as sure as she's woman she will find out a way.

What though her suitor be silent and shy,
Love is a tutor exceedingly sly;
Be he cold as the ice is, despite his delay,
Through a score of devices, love will find out a way.

Love in a maiden takes many a guise;
Glances, love-laden, will dart from her eyes;
Let each faint-hearted Phyllis mark well what I say:
Wheresoever a will is, it will find out a way.

BELL. Well?

CAPTAIN H. Thank you.

Re-enter DINAH, L.

DINAH. If you please, Miss Campbell, I can see Miss Huntington. She's coming through the park.

BELL. Then, Captain, I must leave you for five minutes. I must tell my cousin of your visit. *Au revoir!* (*Exit*, L.)

He bows low, while DINAH, *imitating, goes out*, L.

CAPTAIN H. She's gone; and so's the opportunity. And I've made nothing of it. What a fool I am! I'm not a coward in a general way; but there is something about women that is disconcerting. I'm in mortal terror of that servant-girl. (*walking towards door*, L. *Re-enter* DINAH, L. *Facing round*) Oh, law! there she is. (*crosses to* R.)

DINAH. (*aside*) If someone doesn't keep an eye on him, he'll run away.

Straightens the furniture, mends the fire, re-arranges antimacassars, &c.

CAPTAIN H. (*walking about nervously, keeps continually running against* DINAH, *catching her eye, &c., and turns off disconcerted every time*) That woman's laughing at me. I am sure she is. I can feel it down my back. (*turns suddenly and catches* DINAH *laughing; she looks solemn instantly*) There! I caught her at it. (*more business*) Oh, this will never do. I must make friends with her. I dare say she would be of great assistance. (*catches her eye again, turns*) But I wish she wouldn't look at me like that. What must I say to her? I wonder what her name is. Mary, I shouldn't wonder. Oh,

yes, her name's certain to be Mary. I'll say, "Mary, my dear"—yes, I'll say, "my dear"—it'll cost an effort, but I'll say it. I'll ask for her advice—her assistance. (DINAH *comes up to him*) Oh, good gracious! she's going to speak to me.

DINAH. Miss Campbell asked me to inquire if you would like a little refreshment.

CAPTAIN H. Thank you, no. No, thank you, no refreshment.

DINAH. (*turning off*) Oh, very well, sir.

CAPTAIN H. Now she's going away. Stay—stay a moment.

DINAH. (*at door*) Did you speak, sir? (*returning*)

CAPTAIN H. Yes—I did speak. Mary——

DINAH. My name's Dinah, sir. (*to door*)

CAPTAIN H. (*aside*) How unfortunate! Her name being Dinah has quite put me out. I had depended on her name being Mary. (*she is about to saunter off*) Don't run away.

DINAH. I wasn't running.

CAPTAIN H. You are quite right. You weren't. (*aside*) Now *there's* a stupid blunder. It was my mistake. I meant, don't go away, I want to speak to you.

DINAH. To me, sir?

CAPTAIN H. (*aside*) She's annoyed — perhaps got an appointment. You're in a hurry, perhaps? (*crosses to* L.)

DINAH. Oh, no, sir, not at all. (*crosses to* L.)

CAPTAIN H. (*aside*) She's not. Now, what a pity; I should have got rid of her. The fact is, Mary, my—my good girl——

DINAH. My name is Dinah, sir; and as for being a good girl, I don't know that I am so extra good as all that comes to. (*back to* C.)

CAPTAIN H. Excuse me. It was another mistake of mine. I didn't mean to offend you; I made sure your name was Mary. I was under the impression that all housemaids' names were Mary.

DINAH. Housemaids! But I'm not a housemaid.

CAPTAIN H. Pray forgive me. The wrong word slipped out.

DINAH. I wonder you didn't think I was the cook. (*going*)

CAPTAIN H. I ask ten thousand pardons.

DINAH. (*turning*) Please what is it you were wanting?

CAPTAIN H. Well, the truth is, Dinah—the truth is, my —dear—(*stops with his mouth open.* DINAH *stares, then looks away, and giggles; aside*) She doesn't seem to mind much.

DINAH. What were you a-saying, sir?

CAPTAIN H. I was going to say, Dinah, that you seem to be a very nice amiable sort of girl—(*takes her hand*)—a very nice good-natured girl, indeed; in fact, the very sort of girl to ask a kindness of.

DINAH. I hope so, sir.

CAPTAIN H. I'm sure you are. And do you know that you can do me a great favour if you like, and that I'm going to ask one of you?

DINAH. A favour, sir?

CAPTAIN H. Yes, Dinah; I am going to ask you to—— (*aside*) How shall I put it? Well, in point of fact, to give me——

DINAH. (*snatching her hand away*) Lor, sir!

CAPTAIN H. I was only going to ask you for——

DINAH. He! he! (*giggles*)

CAPTAIN H. (*aside*) I wonder what's the matter with the girl; for——

DINAH. He, he, he!

CAPTAIN H. What *are* you giggling at?

DINAH. Well, I was never asked for such a thing before!

CAPTAIN H. For such a thing? As what?

DINAH. The other gentlemen have always helped themselves.

CAPTAIN H. Good gracious, you're misunderstanding me!

DINAH. Oh no—I understand you well enough, but I shall scream out if you do.

CAPTAIN H. I won't, indeed I won't.

DINAH. I'll raise the house if you come near me.

CAPTAIN H. I won't touch you, on my honour.

DINAH. I'm going to scream.

CAPTAIN H. Don't, I entreat you.

DINAH. Ah!

CAPTAIN H. Hush, my good woman, hush, for mercy's sake! (*tries to stop her.* DINAH, R., CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON, C.)

Re-enter BELL *through window, in hat and riding-habit, whip in hand.*

BELL. Hallo, hallo! I am afraid I am intruding.

CAPTAIN H. I was never more delighted to be interrupted in my life.

BELL. But how about the lady? What do *you* say, Dinah?

DINAH. Please, miss, he was trying to kiss me.

CAPTAIN. H. Madam, I protest——

BELL. You needn't. Dinah, that is not the truth.

DINAH. Indeed, miss——

BELL. Nobody ever tried to kiss you without succeeding.

DINAH. They never did before. (*Exit,* L.)

BELL. Rather pretty girl, that?

CAPTAIN. H. On my honour, madam——

BELL. Tut, tut, man. There's no need to apologise. I should have done the same in your position, I daresay.

CAPTAIN H. But, madam, on the honour of an English officer——

BELL. Are you an officer? Then that accounts for every-

thing. I've always understood you were a sad lot—gay Lotharios—every one of you.

CAPTAIN H. This is the first time I've been called a gay Lothario!

BELL. Perhaps this is the first time you've been found out, eh, Captain? Am I right in saying Captain?

CAPTAIN H. I do hold Her Majesty's commission. My name is Huntington.

BELL. Captain Huntington! Delighted to make your acquaintance. How d'you do? (*shakes hands*) But, I say, don't you wonder who on earth I am?

CAPTAIN H. I presume you are Miss Huntington?

BELL. The girl you've come to look at—to put through her paces—to trot out, you know. Well, what's the verdict? what d'you think of me? (*business*)

CAPTAIN H. I can't help being struck by your remarkable resemblance to your cousin.

BELL. Oh, *you* see it, do you? We *are* like in feature, but our tastes are utterly dissimilar, especially in men.

(*sits on sofa*)

CAPTAIN H. Indeed! What sort of men does *she* prefer?

BELL. *Shy* men! I can't endure them. Are *you* shy?

CAPTAIN H. Not at all. (*sitting again*)

BELL. Don't jump so, then. She met one on the Rhine—one Captain Wynter.

CAPTAIN H. So she did.

BELL. How d' *you* know?

CAPTAIN H. Well, he told me so. I happen to have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

BELL. Oh. you know him, do you? Stupid fellow, isn't he?

CAPTAIN H. Eh?

BELL. Awful donkey.

CAPTAIN H. Well, I haven't noticed it. I've always been inclined to think he was a very decent fellow at the bottom.

BELL. My cousin told me that his weak point was the top. Do you see much of him?

CAPTAIN H. I see a good deal of him. All our lives we have been thrown a good deal into one another's company.

BELL. Well, the next time you see him, tell him with my compliments that when he spends three weeks with a young lady on the Rhine, the least he can do when they get back to London is to call upon—her uncle.

CAPTAIN H. Perhaps he's been prevented. You know the proverb. Man proposes——

BELL. But he doesn't. That's the difficulty. And talking of proposing brings us to the point. We have a little matter of business to arrange. Old Huntington wants you and me to marry. Whether you want to marry me or not I don't know; but I know this, that I don't want to marry you.

CAPTAIN H. You don't? (*rises*)

BELL. Wouldn't have you for the world.

CAPTAIN H. You relieve me of a load of apprehension. (*rises*)

BELL. What! *you* don't want to marry *me?*

CAPTAIN H. I couldn't think of it!

BELL. Shake hands, old fellow!

CAPTAIN H. (*shaking hands;* BELL *crosses to* R.) You have relieved me inexpressibly. The thought of marrying you, Miss Huntington, has been a perfect nightmare to me.

BELL. Has it really?

CAPTAIN H. You've been a millstone hung about my neck.

BELL. Oh, have I?

CAPTAIN H. I thought you might be old. I thought you might be ugly. I thought perhaps this might be your only chance of matrimony. Imagine my delight to find you young —to find you the admired of all admirers.

BELL. I don't think I'm a nightmare, anyhow; and as for being hung round anybody's neck, I shouldn't have thought it was so mighty disagreeable. What *are* you staring at?

CAPTAIN H. You must excuse me, but I can't get over your extraordinary likeness to your cousin.

BELL. That cousin of mine runs strangely in your head. (*sits,* R.) Do you admire her?

CAPTAIN H. For twelve months she has been the goddess of my adoration. She has been the subject of my thoughts by day—my dreams by night. I have been living on the memory of the past and on the expectation of the future. I have——

BELL. (*rattling her whip*) Go on, Captain, go on.

CAPTAIN H. But I weary you.

BELL. (*putting her whip under her arm and folding her hands complacently*) I could listen for a week.

CAPTAIN H. If I don't marry her I shall die a bachelor. Oh, if the devotion of a life could obviate the horrible necessity of proposing to her, how happy I should be!

BELL. Is that the difficulty?

CAPTAIN H. Yes, the only obstacle.

BELL. Why, you're as bad as Captain Wynter.

CAPTAIN H. I *am* Captain Wynter.

BELL. You?

CAPTIAIN H. Concealment is of no use. I am that miserable man.

BELL. (*rises*) So this is why you wouldn't marry me?

CAPTAIN H. Devotion to another.

BELL. Well, Captain Wynter, I suppose you're courtier enough to know that nothing is in such bad manners as to overwhelm one lady with the praises of another. Ah, you

have no idea of making love. Well, I suppose I shall have to make it for you.

CAPTAIN H. You would lay me under an eternal obligation.

BELL. Write to her.

CAPTAIN H. (*sits down and seizes pen*) What must I write, though?

BELL. "Dearest Bella——"

CAPTAIN H. "Dearest Bella."

BELL. "When I am by your side, my feelings overpower me and deprive me of the faculty of speech."

CAPTAIN H. "The faculty of speech."

BELL. "When you are gone, I deplore the opportunity that I have lost, the opportunity of telling you that I adore you, that I——"

CAPTAIN H. Please don't go so fast. I haven't got as far as telling her that I adore her yet.

BELL. And never will if you're not quicker over it.

CAPTAIN H. "That I adore you."

BELL. "That I worship you"—too strong?

CAPTAIN H. By no means. "Worship you——"

BELL. "To desperation." Got to desperation yet?

CAPTAIN H. Got there long ago.

BELL. "Answer me one question—Will you be my wife?"

CAPTAIN H. I've written it.

BELL. "Your faithful and devoted lover." Sign it.

CAPTAIN H. Don't you think it had better be anonymous?

BELL. Will you——

CAPTAIN H. There. (*folds it up*) "Miss Campbell."

BELL. Now give it me. (*pockets it*) Depend upon her getting it.

CAPTAIN H. You're not going to give it to her?

BELL. She's as good as got it.

CAPTAIN H. Oh! what have I done? (*goes*, L.)

BELL. Ha, ha, ha! Upon my word, I don't know how she'll take it.

CAPTAIN H. Let me have it back. (*crosses to* BELL)

BELL. She is so fond of *modest* men, you know.

CAPTAIN H. Do give it me!

BELL. Yes, I will. (*in a corner, holding it up*) On one condition.

CAPTAIN H. What?

BELL. That you propose to her in person.

CAPTAIN H. Anything but that!

BELL. Oh, nonsense! It's a very simple matter.

CAPTAIN H. To those who are used to it, but you forget it would be my first attempt.

BELL. Suppose you practise it with *me*. You wouldn't be afraid of *me*, now, would you?

CAPTAIN H. I don't think I should.

BELL. (*crosses to sofa*) Suppose I am Miss Campbell. Of course I know what's coming, but pretend I don't. (*sits down*) Affected unconcern. (*hums an air*) Go on.

CAPTAIN H. I beg your pardon, Miss Campbell.

BELL. Oh, Captain Wynter, how you startled me! I hadn't the least idea you were there. Thumper!

CAPTAIN H. It is some time since we met.

BELL. It seems an age. At this point, eyes.

CAPTAIN H. It may be long before we meet again.

BELL. Expression of polite concern. (*assuming it*)

CAPTAIN H. It may be years.

BELL. More concern. (*assumes it*)

CAPTAIN H. It may be never.

BELL. Meek despair! (*turns her eyes up*)

CAPTAIN H. All depends upon your answer to the question I am now about to ask.

BELL. Indeed! The eyebrows are here elevated and a puzzled look assumed. A frightful thumper this!

CAPTAIN H. You can hardly fail to be aware of the impression you created on my heart, in those dear days we spent upon the Rhine.

BELL. The head is here averted, and a blush assumed, if possible. It isn't possible in my case, so I'll use a pocket-handkerchief. Go on.

CAPTAIN H. The Rhine, Miss Campbell, is a river of great beauty.

BELL. (*rises and crosses to* R.) Hang the Rhine! She doesn't want a lesson in geography.

CAPTAIN H. Oh, but I was leading up to something!

BELL. Cut the Rhine out.

CAPTAIN H. All right. I'll cut it out. I have long ceased to think of happiness except as dwelling in the sunshine of your smile.

BELL. Come to the point at once.

CAPTAIN H. I'm coming to it! I am about to ask you to permit me to remain in that sweet sunlight—to continue in that dear companionship—for life.

BELL. (*in assumed confusion*) Oh, really, Captain Wynter!

CAPTAIN H. May I be allowed to hope, or am I to despair?

BELL. (*with her head averted behind handkerchief*) This is so very sudden—so—so—unexpected—I—I——

CAPTAIN H. You refuse me?

BELL. (*turning away, but putting out one hand behind her*) No! no! no!

CAPTAIN H. (*seizing it and kneeling down*) Then you accept me, and you make me of all men the happiest.

(*kisses her hand*)

BELL. Can I? (*turning*) Then I do.

Removes hat; her hair falls down as did MISS CAMPBELL'S.

CAPTAIN H. Miss Campbell! (*rises*)

BELL. Yes, it's I. (*crosses to* CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON)

CAPTAIN H. And not Miss Huntington?

BELL. Yes, both. I have no cousin. I've played you a trick, but I will play no more; I'll make you a true, faithful wife—if you'll forgive me.

CAPTAIN H. (*kisses her*) Hurrah! I've done it.

BELL. No, I think *I* did it.

CAPTAIN H. Anyhow, it's done.

Re-enter DINAH, L.R.

DINAH. If you please, miss, your uncle's coming.

BELL. He'll be just in time to give us his congratulations. (*taking* CAPTAIN HUNTINGTON'S *arm*)

DINAH. Law, miss, you don't mean to say the Captain has proposed?

CAPTAIN H. And what is more, he's been accepted. (*advancing*)

DINAH. Well I never!

BELL.

Now, having conquered, without stooping quite
So low as one who was in much my plight,
If any here should take in evil part
The open wearing of a maiden's heart,
I do entreat they will on me confer
The full forgiveness they extend to her.
Although confined to saying yea or nay,
We women generally have our way,
By being bold or bashful, coy or kind.
Was not Orlando woo'd by Rosalind?
Her hapless love did Viola not show?
And did not Juliet aid her Romeo?
Beneath the lustre of their bright effulgence,
I plead my title to your kind indulgence;
True, I have trespassed—the event must show
If I have your forgiveness: yes or no?

CURTAIN.

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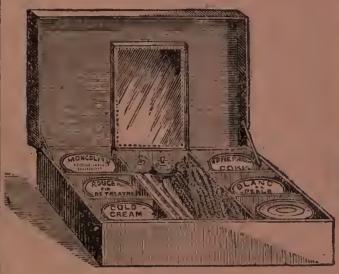

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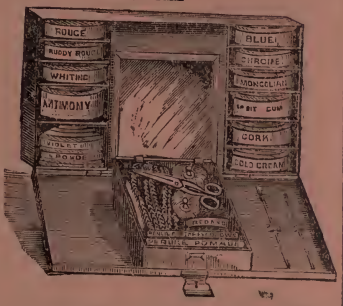

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